NOVA SCOTIA CENTRE
for CRAFT *and* DESIGN

Mary E. Black Gallery
1683 Barrington Street
Halifax, Nova Scotia

Ocean Blue

Juried Work by Members of the Yarmouth Crafts Guild

Organized by the Yarmouth Crafts Guild

September 20 - October 26, 2002

NOVA SCOTIA
Tourism and Culture

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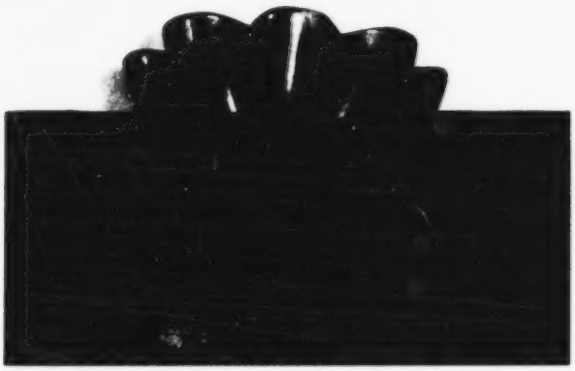
Along a weathered dock large wooden netting shuttles flash in the hands of fish net makers. Beside a country road a man in a baseball cap and rubber boots hammers slats on a wooden lobster trap, then adds it to a pyramid of others.

More than two hundred years after the town of Yarmouth began, these are some of the sights and sounds of people plying crafts produced here for generations.

From the late 1700's to the late 1800's the Yarmouth area buzzed with activity. At the waterfront sail makers worked in large sail lofts. Some had their stoves suspended from the ceiling to free the total floor space for mainsails. A brass foundry produced the brass fittings for the ships. Ironmongers forged tillers, and ironwork of all kinds used on ships and elsewhere. One such tiller weighing 700 pounds and made by W. H. Gridley was proudly displayed at the 1900 Paris Exhibition. Mast and spar makers, finish carpenters for cabin detail, carvers for captain's chests and figureheads worked on Yarmouths finest products- the graceful sailing ships that sailed round the world.



They were then called "skilled labourers". Today their skills are echoed in modern day crafts.

This exhibition encompasses a broad spectrum of crafts, which hark back to the traditional handwork of the area. Wooden boat building still survives in a small way; some build their own rowboats, or small wooden dory's. Cedar strip canoe builders can still be found. The carvers now craft shore birds, waterfowl decoys, decorated chests and stools, shell like burl bowls and miniature figureheads. The art of sail canvas weaving has its echoes in hand woven rugs, shawls and warm scarves. Forging and metalwork stemming from shipbuilding tradition produces decorative gates, window grills, and the type of weathervanes that stood proudly atop many a Yarmouth home.

Men still sail out of Yarmouth's harbour in winter's freezing winds, all warmed under their slickers by hand knit sweaters, hats, mitts and socks. Some of these labours of love are still made from sheep's wool shorn from the backs of local animals and spun by hand into fine wool yarn.

Sturdy pottery dishes, crocks, jugs, and containers of all kinds were used aboard ship. Today local potters produce finely thrown pottery in the same manner, using electricity rather than foot-powered wheels. While the ships were at sea, seamen's wives, mothers and daughters "kept the home fires burning". Their often lonely days were filled with quilting, rug hooking, crocheting, tatting and knitting. Some of the useful and decorative items produced by them in the 1800's can be seen at the Yarmouth County Museum, a treasure trove of local history.

Today the Tri-County area (Yarmouth, Shelburne, Clare) is known for the high quality of quilts made here. Tourists and collectors roam the highways looking for that "Quilts for sale" sign. At local craft

stores, the colourful coverings are a focal point. Yarmouth also boasts prize winning rug hookers, whose bright and original designs never fail to delight. Lighthouse scenes are a favourite. Hand knitting is also enjoying a resurgence in the fashion world.

Stained glass windows were a must in any Victorian mansion and Yarmouth has its share of homes with fine examples of this craft. The technique survives in the hands of inspired stained glass artists who work in our area and belong to the Yarmouth Crafts Guild.

Potter Michael Morris and a small group of craftspeople formed the Yarmouth Crafts Guild in 1979. Throughout the ups and downs of the ensuing years, it has never wavered in its original intent. Unlike Medieval craft guilds whose purpose was primarily commercial and exclusive, today's guilds exist to bring crafters in a variety of mediums together. This provides support, encouragement and often inspiration from each other's work. The Yarmouth Crafts Guild has also held exhibitions and sales locally, hosted From The Ground Up an exhibit of the Nova Scotia Potters Guild, and published a booklet "For The Love Of it" honouring the older crafters in our area. The Guild is a member of the Yarmouth Arts Regional Council (YARC) and supports them in their efforts to keep arts and crafts in the public eye. This exhibition is the Guilds' most ambitious to date. It is also the first time the Yarmouth Crafts Guilds' work has been shown outside the immediate area.

Yarmouth's location at the extreme southwest end of the peninsula has both advantages and drawbacks for the craftspeople working here. Being far from urban centres, access to materials is often expensive and frustrating. Exhibits such as those at the Mary E. Black Gallery are difficult for most to attend. This can lead to a lack of outside influence in local work.

On the plus side, the natural surroundings are a continual source of inspiration. The sea, in all its moods and colours, the many greens of the forests and marsh, the ever-changing carpets of wildflowers, have been expressed in craftwork for generations. The west facing aspect of Yarmouth and the Fundy shore provides spectacular sunsets. Some of these indescribable colours are reflected in the hooked rugs and quilts in this exhibition.

The theme of "Ocean Blue" goes far beyond the obvious allusion to the waters' hues. The Yarmouth Crafts Guild presents these works as a group effort, an example of co-operation between craftspeople from diverse backgrounds, working in many mediums, and items truly produced "for the love of it."

Gwen Hewey-Parsons
September 2002

Acknowledgements
The Historical information regarding Yarmouth's waterfront artisans is partly from the book Novascotiaman by Clement W. Crowell, published by the Nova Scotia Museum in 1979. Other information is from the Yarmouth County Museum. The photographs which accompany the exhibit, are from the Argyle Township Court House Archives and the booklet For The Love Of It, is self-published by the Yarmouth Crafts Guild. Booklet photographs are by Peter Barss.

List of Work in the Exhibition

Joe Bengivenni
1. Weathervane, aluminium
2. Window Grill, forged iron
3. Poker, forged iron

Shirley Bradshaw
4. Rooster with Attitude, hooked rug
5. Newfoundland Coast, hooked rug

Lenn Burkitt
6. Herald Angels, wood carving

Marilyn Burns
7. Seashells, hooked rug

Doris Cooke
8. Reversible Child's Jacket, quilted and appliqued
9. Adult Jacket, quilted and appliqued

Cecil Day
10. Deer Masks, paper mache and etchings
11. Mussel Bed Quilt, raw silk, muslin

Barbara Doucette
12. Apple Head Dolls, carved apples, knitting

Ralph Eyre
13. Untitled, driftwood sculpture

Denton Ford
14. Shell Bowl, carved wood
15. Maple Burl Bowl, turned wood

Maria Gisladottir
16. Falling in Love in the Maritimes, mosaic

Ron Gillis
17. Corner Cupboard, pine
18. Wall cabinet, pine

Audrey Goudey
19. Untitled, hooked rug
20. Untitled, hooked rug

Gwen Hewey-Parsons
21. Modern SouWester, knitted and felted hat

Pauline Hubbard
22. Shoo Fly, quilt

John Hood
23. Grandfather Clock, wood, metal
24. H.M.S. Zealous, model ship

Susan Hood
25. Kelp Garden, stained glass window

Bruce Jacquard
26. Marble Players, wood relief

Barbara Jess
27. The Watch, hooked rug

Ann Jones
28. Fisherman's Gansey, knitting
29. Rowing Sweater, knitting

Megan Jones & Ann Jones
30. Sweater/Purse/Scarf, knitting

Jay LeBlanc
31. Underwater Dance Study, stained glass

Sheila Lewis
32. Pottery Sink Basin, porcelain

Dan Mackill
33. Hand Woven Throw, wool

Frances Morris
34. Pasta/Mussel Bowls, stoneware

Michael Morris
35. Afternoon at Bartlett's Beach, stoneware bowls

Marguerite Newell
36. Mariner's Compass, quilted wall hanging

Nancy Robicheau
37. Forget-Me-Nots and Lavender, silk ribbon embroidery

Tobilee Sabean
38. Marble Lamp, marbles, lead, found materials

Jurgen Schenk
39. Bird, wood carving on driftwood

Catherine Sheldrick
40. Ocean Playground, quilt

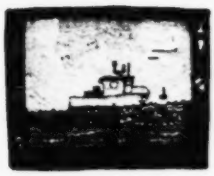
Mary Sheldrick
41. Harbour Life, quilt

Mary Smith
42. Pineapple Table Cover, crochet
43. Doily, crochet

Vera Sollows
44. Clark's Star, hooked rug

Hazel Stos
45. Cardigan, knitting

Marian White
46. Yarmouth Light, counted cross stitch



Catalogue Images
Front cover: Bruce Jacquard, *Marble Players*; Ralph Eyre, driftwood sculpture. Page 2: Denton Ford, *Shell Bowl*. Page 3: Barbara Jess, *The Watch*. Page 4: Vera Sollows, *Clark's Star*. Photographs by Lorne A. Cooke.